(c) and (d) Under Phase—I, strengthening of runway has been taken up at an estimated cost of Rs. 8 crores and is likely to be completed by June, 1999.

Air services to Rourkela city

169. MISS FRIDA TOPNO: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Rourkela Steel City which is at the nerve centre of the tribal region known as Chhotanagpur and the surrounding area could not be developed as there is no Air link to Rourkela and NRIs are not attracted for investment due to communication problem;

(b) whether Government have any proposal to connect Rourkela with Air link with the rest of the country;

(c) if so, what are the proposals before Government; and

(d) if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) The Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by the Government.

(b) to (d) Rourkela airfield is suitable only for operation of smaller type of aircraft. Because of the shortage of suitable aircraft. Indian Airlines has, at present, no plans to air link Rourkela. Private operators with suitable aircraft are being encouraged to include new stations in their network including Rourkela, subject to viability.

Air services from Patna to major cities

170. SHRI JANARDAN YADAV: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any plan to connect all the major towns of Bihar, Assam, Orissa with Patna and other major cities of the country by air transport; and

(b) whether Government propose to connect Patna with Bhagalpur, Jamshedpur, Bokaro and Darbhanga by air?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) The Government has laid down route dispersal guidelines with a view to achieve better regulation of air transport services taking into account the need for air transport services of different regions of the country. It is, however, up to the airlines to provide air services to specific places depending upon the traffic demand and commercial viability subject to compliance of route dispersal guidelines issued by Government.

(b) Bhagalpur, Jamshedpur, Bokaro and Darbhanga airfields are suitable only for operations with smaller type of aircraft. Becuase of shortage of suitable type of aircraft, Indian Airlines has no plans to operate to these stations. However, Private Operators with suitable aircraft are being encouraged to add new stations including these in their network, subject to viability.

Recommendation of Kelkar Committee

171. SHRI SURESH KALMADI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Kelkar Committee appointed to suggest guidelines for the privatisation of Air India, has submitted its report;

(b) if so, the findings thereof; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.